

County Line

News from the Government Offices of Lumpkin County, Georgia

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December 2005



County Joins Tree Recycling Effort

Lumpkin County is taking part in Keep Georgia Beautiful's *Bring One for the Chipper* Christmas tree recycling event Jan. 7. The county's new Recycling Center, on Red Oak Flats Road (off of Hwy. 60) will be a local drop-off location. The Recycling Center is not open for business yet, but residents can get an advance look at the new facility when they drop off their trees—minus the decorations—that Saturday between 9am and 4pm. Discarded trees will be turned into mulch, and free dogwood seedlings will be given in exchange for trees while supplies last. For details call 864-3742.



Sewerage System On Go

The final pieces of the sewerage system that will be the life blood of growth in the GA 400/60 area came together last month. The state issued the last two permits needed for completion of the project. The Environmental Protection Division approved design plans and gave the go-ahead for the Lumpkin County Water and Sewerage Authority to build a pump station and for WRF Georgia, LLC, to begin construction of its 50,000 gallon-per-day wastewater treatment plant on Red Oak Flats Road. Both projects are expected to be ready by the time the system's first customer, The Home Depot, opens its doors—and its potties—for business.



Shop with a Cop Donations Needed



The Lumpkin County Sheriff's Office's annual *Shop with a Cop* program will provide Christmas cheer to 27 children and teens this year.

That's a 40% increase over the number served last year. Through the program, employees of the Sheriff's Office work to raise enough money to take each of the kids, identified as financially in need by Lumpkin Family Connection, on a Wal-Mart shopping spree a few days before Christmas. Each child is paired with a deputy, detention officer or other Sheriff's Office employee for

Commissioners' Meetings Open to All

Did you know Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners meetings are open to the public? Public attendance is welcomed at regularly scheduled monthly meetings—both informational first-Thursday "workshops" and third Thursday board meetings—as well as at the "called" meetings in between. Workshops are held to set the agenda for the monthly board meeting and to give the commissioners staff input and other information they'll need to make good decisions. Commissioners schedule other meetings as needed—and there are many—to discuss issues, meet with other groups and sometimes make decisions that can't wait for the next board meeting. When there's not enough advance notice to announce called meetings in the weekly newspaper, flyers are posted on the courthouse doors announcing meeting times and locations. Only rarely, when commissioners discuss personnel or land purchase issues in "executive session," are meetings not public.

Anyone wishing to address the board may fill out a form at the commissioners' office asking to be considered for inclusion on the agenda. Issues appropriate for addressing in the board meeting format are placed on the agenda. The board also includes time for brief public comments at the end of its workshops and board meetings.



the outing. There is usually about a \$200-per-child budget, with the first hundred dollars earmarked for clothing; the rest available for more frivolous choices. Some kids even use part of their own gift allowances to buy gifts for others. In addition to the tangible things they receive through *Shop with a Cop*, the children benefit from seeing the softer, compassionate side of law enforcement. The program depends on donations from the community. For details, or to make a donation, call Mary Russo at 864-0414 or stop by the administrative lobby of the detention center on East Main Street. Don't delay. Shopping day is December 21.

Season's Greetings

Progress Report: 400/60 Intersection

After record breaking rains stalled an ambitious timeline for development at Lumpkin County's GA 400/60 intersection, The Home Depot had to change its store opening projections. Initially scheduled to open last month, the home improvement store is now on the calendar for completion in February or March of 2006.

Chestatee Village shopping center developer Maxwell Properties is talking with several grocers interested in being neighbors with The Home Depot at the busy crossroads, and Maxwell vice president Gary Wert says he's getting bites from some restaurants. Building permits have been issued for the 15-18 retail shops that will face Long Branch Road. Construction is likely to begin on those shops before this month is out, with cash registers ringing up sales (and sales tax) as early as next March or April.

Minding the Business (License)

Businesses licensed to operate in Lumpkin County by now should have received their annual license renewal invoices from the Lumpkin County Planning Department. The license fee, technically an occupational tax, is due Dec. 31, 2006. If you were licensed in 2005 and haven't received your renewal notice yet, or if you received a bill for a business you no longer operate, please contact the Planning Department. As of 2002, most businesses operating in unincorporated Lumpkin County are required to have county business licenses. Unlicensed businesses are subject to penalties. Call 864-6894 for information.



Ho Ho Holiday Hours

Lumpkin County Government Offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 23, Monday, Dec. 26 and Monday, Jan. 2 in observance of the holidays. In addition, county offices will be closed during a long lunch break on Thursday, Dec. 22, when staffers will get together from 11:30am to 1pm for an employee Christmas party.



Lumpkin County . . . continued from reverse side

2006 Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule.

The 2006 schedule for the commissioners' regular monthly workshops and board meetings will remain the same as in 2005. Workshops are held at 9am the first Thursday of each month. Board meetings are held the third Thursday of each month, alternating between morning and evening to enable citizens with varying schedules to attend. Board meetings will be held at 6pm every other month beginning in January; 9am board meetings will be held every other month beginning in February. With county meeting space limited, these meetings are held at Dahlonge City Hall. (Please park next door at Parks and Recreation facility for daytime meetings!) Occasionally regular meetings must be rescheduled or relocated, but the commissioners make every effort to stick to the planned meeting schedules.

Timken Donation: Gift and Challenge

A generous donation presented last month to Lumpkin County, made on behalf of all the associates at Timken US's Dahlonge plant, serves as both a gift and a challenge to citizens. Management at the local plant, which celebrated its 25th year in Dahlonge this fall, secured funds from the Timken Foundation to help with projects at Yahoola Creek Park, specifically a pavilion and playground planned near the creek and soccer fields. A total award of \$110,000 was announced, \$70,000 of that available for immediate use and another \$40,000 contingent upon the community's raising \$40,000 in matching funds. Timken's Roger Yonts, human resources director for the Dahlonge facility, says the company's local giving program focuses on community projects that enhance quality of life for citizens. "We're pleased to help the county with these projects, which will be an ongoing source of enjoyment and pride for our youth and all of our residents."

Parks and Recreation director Rob Staples says the planned pavilion, a covered shelter with picnic tables, concessions, restrooms and storage areas, will be the "center-piece of the park." He and the parks and recreation board of directors are working now to set up the community fundraising component of the matching donation and soon will announce how citizens can get involved in the effort. He hopes the pavilion can be completed in time for the opening of soccer season and the new soccer fields next fall.



Lumpkin County: Plenty of Good Apples

Like they say: A few bad apples don't spoil the whole barrel. The recent discovery of employee thefts in some Lumpkin County government departments left many of the county's 300-plus full- and part-time employees feeling betrayed and angry. The county is taking steps at all levels—from developing new checks and balances policies to installing more secure software—to prevent such crimes in the future and maintain the public trust. In the meantime, it is hoped that our community won't let the actions of a few reflect poorly on the entire organization. The great majority of our county government staff are honest, loyal, trustworthy employees who serve with integrity and deserve the utmost respect.



Industrial Sites Available Now

The Lumpkin County Development Authority has a number of small industrial building sites, from 1½ to 5 acres, for sale in its Red Oak Park industrial development on Red Oak Flats Road near the GA 400/60 intersection. Lots are priced at around \$50,000 per acre, depending on location. For site information contact Bruce Abraham, Development Authority executive director, at (706) 864-0423.



10-Digit Dialing Ahead

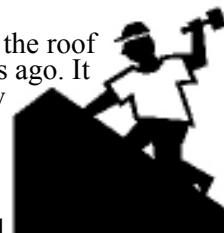
Better start exercising that index finger (and reprogramming those speed dial settings). Ten-digit dialing will be required for all local phone calls in Lumpkin County and the entire 706 area code region beginning April 3, 2006. A new area code, 762, was added to the 706 region in September and the new code is being assigned to all new phone numbers in the region. Existing 706 code phone numbers will NOT be changed. Local calls can be



dialed now either with or without the area code. Beginning April 3, calls made without the area code will not be connected. (Dialing of long distance calls—1+area code+7-digit phone number—will not change.) Helpful hint: If you distribute printed materials within the local area code region, you may want to get a jump on having them reprinted to reflect your new 10-digit number.

Up on the Rooftop...

No, that wasn't reindeer hooves dancing on the roof of the Lumpkin County Library a few weeks ago. It was contractors putting a sorely needed new roof on the county-owned building next to the courthouse. The old roof, original to the 22-year-old facility, had been leaking for some time despite repeated spot repairs made over the years. The new roof was paid for with the help of a state maintenance and repair grant for libraries through the Georgia Public Library Service. Thanks to that 50 percent matching funds grant, Lumpkin County's share of the project expense was just over \$15,000—only about half of the actual cost. The Lumpkin County Library, part of the two-county Chestatee Regional Library System, has more than 45,000 print and non-print items to keep safe and dry. For information, visit www.chestateelibrary.org.



Just Call or Click!

If you have questions or concerns about your county government, answers or assistance are as close as your phone or computer. For contact information for county departments or commissioners, see Dept. and Contact Info., www.lumpkincounty.gov or call 864-3742.

County Commission

Steve Gooch, Chairman
Dr. John Raber, District 1
Deborah Hutcheson, District 2
Clarence Stowers, District 3
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